



ABSOLUTE BIKES



# THIS IS FLAGSTAFF

## About Our Region

The Flagstaff area is rich in cultural diversity, beauty, and history, as well as outstanding educational, recreational, and scientific opportunities. Flagstaff, the largest city in northern Arizona, is the regional center and county seat for Coconino County. The city of Flagstaff is nestled at the base of the San Francisco Peaks, which rise to 12,633 feet, and is surrounded by the largest ponderosa pine forest in the country. At nearly 7,000 feet, Flagstaff is one of the highest elevation cities in the United States, with an annual snowfall that rivals upstate New York cities.

Flagstaff enjoys a four-season climate with cold winters and mild summers, low humidity, and considerable temperature changes. Summer temperatures are cool, with a short growing season. Summer culminates with the annual monsoon season, with rain and thunderstorms daily during July and August. Winter averages 45 degrees with 94 inches of snowfall per year. Adequate snowfall plays a key role in providing the economic benefits that arise from Flagstaff's abundant winter recreational opportunities. While snow may fall in any season and extreme winter snowstorms do occur, Flagstaff is one of the ten sunniest locations in the United States. Local variations in climate play a major role in shaping the range of vegetation communities, ecosystems, and associated wildlife found in the region.

The *Flagstaff Regional Plan* area includes the city of Flagstaff as well as the unincorporated county communities of Kachina Village, Mountainaire, Doney Park, Winona, Fort Valley, and Bellemont. The city of Flagstaff encompasses just over 64 square miles of the planning area, and is the regional commercial and institutional hub of northern Arizona where rural residents come to shop, seek medical care, and conduct business. Historic settlement patterns created population centers along the railroad, Route 66, and then later along routes to and from the Grand Canyon.

"These days, as in ancient times, the Flagstaff area continues to attract stalwart, self-reliant individuals who depend not on social graces, but rather on a restricted, sober mentality grounded in a rugged, frontier disposition to forge their daily lives."

- Marie D. Jackson, "The View From Here: Contemporary Essays by Flagstaff Authors"



Photo by: A. Leggett

## Who Lives Here?



*Photos credit: Northern Arizona University Cline Library collection*

The planning area is home to about 80,000 year-round residents, with roughly 64,000, or 80 percent, within the Flagstaff city limits. This population number includes Northern Arizona University (NAU) students, many who do live year-round in the community. The annual growth rate for the region has fluctuated between 2.2 percent in the 1990s and early 2000s, to about 1.1 percent in the late 2000s. The area's population is expected to grow to approximately 91,000 over the next ten years and to 103,000 by 2030. This would mean over 20,000 additional residents in the planning area, the majority of whom would settle in the city of Flagstaff.

Population is the driver for many aspects of a community. With more people comes more needs—more jobs, housing, and public places, to name a few. This is why it is important that we proactively plan for future needs now so that we can sustain the quality of life for our residents—both existing and future. How we build in the future will greatly affect land consumption and our overall community character. How the community develops can also influence the type of people who are attracted to live, work, and play here.

### WHERE WE'VE BEEN

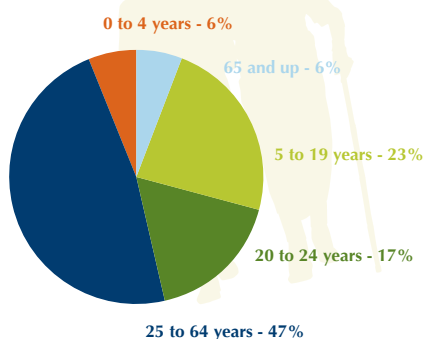
People began living in the Flagstaff area thousands of years ago, with Native American hunters and gatherers eventually forming agricultural communities. Flagstaff was incorporated as a town in 1894, established because of the construction of the transcontinental railroad in 1882. Because of its fresh water supply and abundant natural resources, the town grew as a railroad hub with the strong economic industries of cattle ranching, sheep herding, and lumber exporting products out of the community. Ranching and the railroad remain vital industries in Flagstaff today. In 1894, Flagstaff was chosen as the location for the Lowell Observatory, where in 1930 Pluto was discovered using one of the observatory's telescopes. The U.S. Naval Observatory Flagstaff Station was established in 1955, solidifying the area as a premier location for astronomical research. In addition, NAU was built in 1899, providing higher education opportunities in Flagstaff that are ever-expanding today. The interstate highway system in the mid-twentieth century transformed the landscape, as Flagstaff was situated along historic Route 66, bringing even more visitors and facilitating a growing tourism industry.

Historically, Flagstaff was a working community, made up of people who understand the land. Native Americans, ranchers, and railroad workers built this town. With the introduction of higher education, the interstate, and a later influx of government jobs, there was a transition from our traditional blue-collar community to more white-collar jobs and jobs in the service sector.

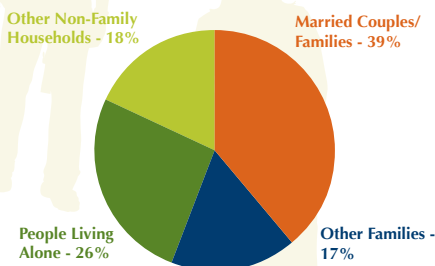


By the year 2010, the City of Flagstaff was home to nearly 66,000 people, of which over 25 percent were university students. This is a young and vibrant city. We are a community of families (56 percent) as well as individuals living alone (26 percent), with a median income of more than \$44,000 per year. The economy base now is focused more on services than products, as was the case in the past. Our community includes a mix of mostly white residents (73 percent, of which just over 18 percent are Hispanic) and Native Americans including Navajo, Hopi and Havasupai (12 percent), with smaller populations of “other” people, including a Black population from earlier workforce migrations, all of whom contribute greatly to the community’s diversity. The majority of our residents are between the ages of 25 and 64, with the median age just under 27 years.

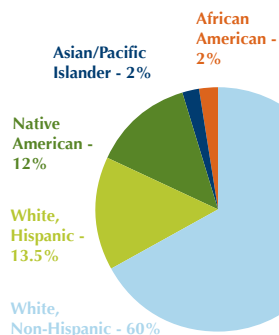
**Population Age**  
City of Flagstaff, 2010



**Household Types**  
City of Flagstaff, 2010



**Ethnicity**  
City of Flagstaff, 2010



While demographics may change over time, Flagstaff continues its small-town traditions, with a diverse community of people who truly love the land. We are known in many ways—as a college town, a ski town, a mountain town, and an outdoor town—all of which attract an interesting mix of people, in both our workforce and our visitors.

There are a number of unique physical and social characteristics that have either affected growth or amplified the impacts of recent growth, such as the university student and faculty population. There is a substantial seasonal population, with up to 20 percent of the

The first native residents of this area were the Sinagua and Anasazi, who were predecessors to today’s area tribes, including the Navajo, Hopi, and Hualapai. This heritage is reflected in many local place names, such as Anasazi Ridge, Sinagua Middle School, and Coconino High School, to name a few.



Photo by: XXXXXXXXX



Photo by: Dahlia Stack

region's houses being second homes (cite source here in biblio). In addition, there are over 6 million visitors to the area annually. People from all over the world come to visit the Grand Canyon National Park, Coconino County national monuments, and cultural and educational attractions such as the Museum of Northern Arizona and Lowell Observatory. The region has become a destination of choice for people seeking an active, outdoor lifestyle.

## WHERE WE'RE GOING

Demographically, projections show that our city will continue to diversify in many ways. Our ethnic mix will be more diverse. We will have a wider array of professional opportunities. Our households will be smaller, and people will seek multigenerational housing options for their extended families. We will be more prosperous.

The community's densities will slowly increase within the city, to provide for more efficient services and to develop a more walkable community. Higher densities are easier to serve with transit and use less water. This focus on growing "in" versus growing "out," in turn, protects the surrounding open spaces and the ecological, economic, and recreational opportunities that entails, as well as ensuring that rural living will continue to be an option.

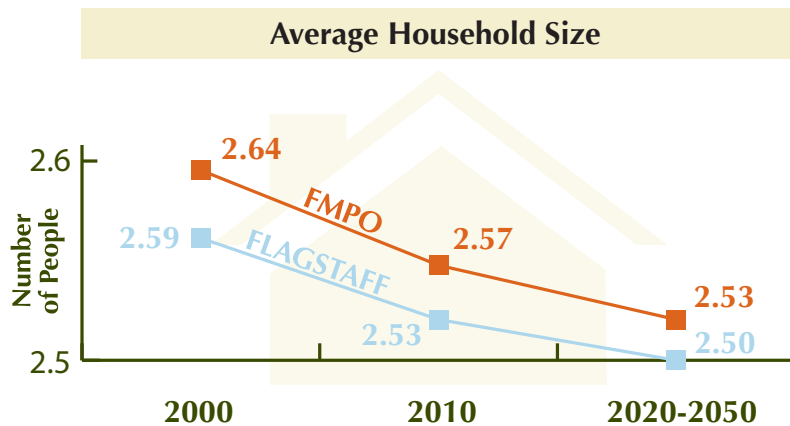
Planning, regulations, and incentives all influence density outcomes, yet the market also delivers the final product. For example, the table below compares city population projections to estimated water supply. Demand exceeds sustainable supply at around 85,000 people. The community can influence conservation (demand) and supply with smart planning.

Future Population Projections						
	Flagstaff		NAU (1)		FMPO	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
2020	71,300	72,800	21,300	23,150	90,600	92,500
2030	77,100	81,300	25,000	25,000	97,400	102,600
2040	79,500	87,400	25,000	25,000	100,100	110,000
2050	79,700	92,900	25,000	25,000	100,300	117,000

Flagstaff and FMPO projected populations based on slowly increasing percent of County population.

<sup>1</sup> NAU population figures from NAU enrollment data and Arizona Board of Regents stated goals.

Housing mix is generally a response to the market, which operates within local regulatory, economic, and financial environments. The following tables and charts illustrate the high percentage of single family houses in the FMPO region. They also show a high percentage of renters suffering a housing burden with average rents 16 percent higher than the state average. Can the housing supply better match the community demographics? Can an increase in multi-family options meet the increase in non-family and single households as well as meet the affordability challenge?



2000, 2010 U.S. Census Bureau  
 FMPO is the weighted average of City and County  
 2020-2050 are interpolated numbers from  
<http://www.azstats.gov/population-projections.aspx>

Housing Mix								
	Flagstaff				FMPO			
	Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached	Multi-family	Mobile Home	Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached	Multi-Family	Mobile Home
2000	9,924	2,513	7,207	1,769				
2010	12,531	3,258	8,251	820				
2020								
2030								
2040								
2050								

Sources:  
 2010 <http://www.usa.com/coconino-county-az-housing.htm#Units-in-Structure>  
 2010 <http://www.usa.com/flagstaff-az-housing.htm#Units-in-Structure>  
 2000 <http://www.cityofinnovation.com/docs/flagstaffDemographicProfile.pdf>

Housing			
Monthly Rental	Flagstaff, AZ	%	Arizona
Occupied Units Paying Rent	11,529		771,464
\$199 or Less	157	1.3%	1.0%
\$200 to \$299	51	0.4%	1.5%
\$300 to \$499	696	6.0%	8.1%
\$500 to \$699	1,651	14.3%	22.3%
\$700 to \$999	3,034	26.3%	32.8%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	5,323	46.2%	25.7%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	430	3.7%	6.0%
\$2,000 or More	187	1.6%	2.6%
Median	\$1,010	-	\$844

For successful new development and redevelopment projects, the housing options will need to increase, as well as the mix of housing prices for various incomes.



Photo by: Brittany Smolinski

The future workforce will desire to be connected to work and friends in a very efficient manner, by walking, biking, using transit, or virtually. High-speed data will be imperative to tomorrow's community, along with transportation choices. The types of employment—occupation and industry mix—will influence salary and wages, affecting the quantity and quality of goods and services consumed in and delivered to the area. The location decision of major employers needs to address transportation options, tax policies, workforce, and land availability, to name a few.

Flagstaff wants to be a more compact city with housing, employment, and transportation options. The region wants to be prosperous, authentic, and a great place to be. As a fair and well-managed city, the future community rewards strong and smart leadership with better jobs, a greater tax-base, beautiful and sensitive development in which people can afford to live, work, and play.

## What are the Constraints to Growth and Development?

People who live and work in the area see the cumulative effects of the region's growth. For many, growth is seen as positive for the expansion of economic opportunities, while for others growth is increasingly being associated with negative impacts such as traffic congestion, air and water pollution, loss of open space and traditional agricultural uses, limited housing choices for the work force, and loss of the "small town feel." While it is true that there are different community perceptions toward growth, this plan realizes that growth is inevitable and good for our economy and overall community prosperity; therefore, we must acknowledge the following challenges we must face in accommodating this growth.

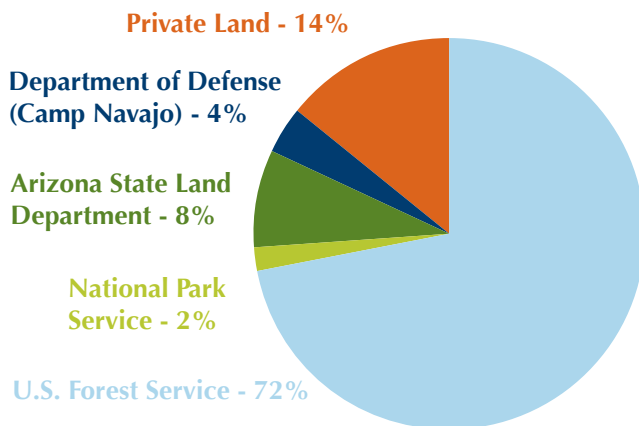
### LAND CONSTRAINTS

Although the area covered by this plan is quite large, less than 14 percent of the land is privately owned. Approximately 8 percent, or 42 square miles (26,880 acres), is controlled by the Arizona State Land Department. Within the city limits, there are over 7,000 acres of State Land, 40 percent of which has been identified as suitable for development, and approximately 60 percent has been identified for conservation and open space. Most of the remainder of undeveloped land is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Of the large vacant parcels located within the city limits, a majority are at the periphery and can be considered potential "greenfield development." There also are a fairly large number of smaller parcels scattered throughout the city that are suitable for infill development. In the unincorporated county areas, there are a few large vacant parcels remaining.



Photo by: Brittany Smolinski

#### Jurisdiction



In the 1990s and early 2000s, the population in the region increased by about 1,200 people per year. Accommodating this growth required the addition of almost 500 new housing units each year.





Photo by: Brittany Smolinski

If 100 percent of these units were in subdivisions with densities matching historically developed subdivisions, or about 3.5 units per acre, this would require almost 150 acres per year to accommodate new growth. That kind of land consumption would rapidly deplete the remaining available vacant private land. This was the reason for the minimum densities that were applied in the 2001 Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan and the reason this plan is encouraging walkable, compact development in order to curb the effects of urban sprawl.


The community will accommodate future growth by following smart growth strategies, using the available land in an efficient and environmentally responsible way. Projections for the ultimate population of Flagstaff and surrounding areas vary. Population projections adopted by the Arizona Department of Economic Security in 1997 showed an anticipated population of the City of Flagstaff of 158,272 in the year 2050. Projections adopted by the state in 2006 show much reduced anticipated growth figures, and the new 2050 projection for the City is 96,418.


If this occurs and accommodations have not been made, local housing and land costs will increase substantially, and newcomers may be forced to move to distant communities, creating sprawl and long commutes to work.


## GROWTH ALTERNATIVES

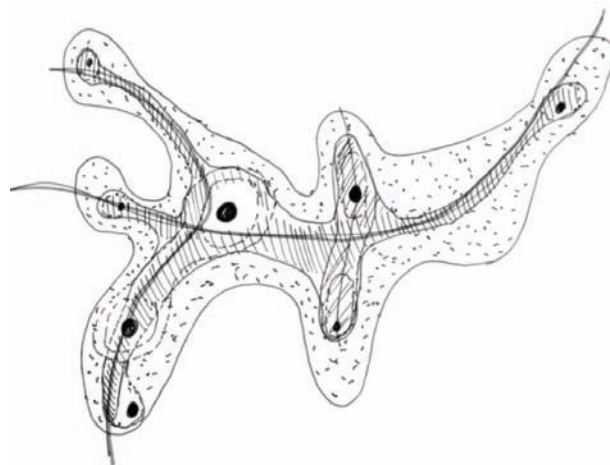
Options for accommodating future growth include:

- Redeveloping, infilling, and developing at higher densities within existing communities and existing growth boundaries.

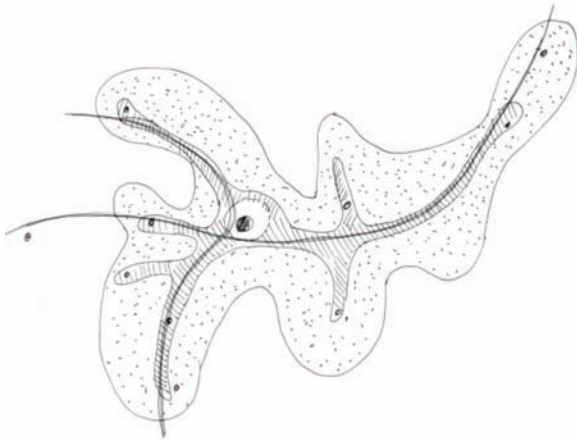
 Residential suburbs are moderately more dense and walkable, using even less land; more demand is met in 'core' areas

 Commercial areas centers have increased densities with mixed-uses and emphasis on pedestrian accessibility

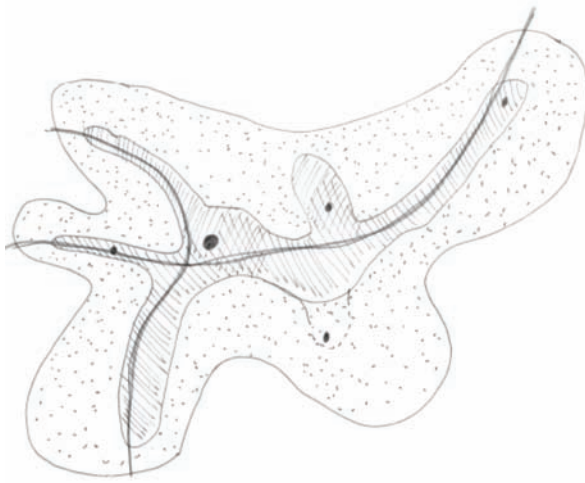
 Downtown and other centers expand and emerge as greater employment centers and higher residential densities to serve surrounding needs.



- Expanding the growth boundaries, which requires the exchange of federal lands into private ownership or the sale of state lands for development.



- Creating new communities at the periphery of the city or in outlying areas where little or no development and utility infrastructure currently exists.





This plan allows for a variety of approaches to meet the needs of existing and future residents as we grow.



Photo by: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX


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 Residential suburbs are moderately more dense and walkable, using less land


 Commercial areas are concentrated more into centers with a tighter mix of commercial and residential uses

 Downtown expands and similar yet smaller centers emerge in places with employment centers and higher residential densities.

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 Residential construction of lower density on more lands to the edge of the community

 Commercial corridors with some medium density residential

 Downtown to continue as primary central location, as we know it today.

## WATER CONSTRAINTS

There has been considerable discussion during the preparation of this plan about the capacity of the City of Flagstaff municipal water system. Estimates indicate that with moderate growth, existing sustainable city water sources can sustain the city until sometime between 2030 and 2035. The City is considering a variety of alternatives to supplement supply. This may come from new wells, increased conservation, and reclaimed processing. Another alternative being explored is Red Gap Ranch, a 7,800-acre ranch between Flagstaff and Winslow purchased by the City in 2005 for future water supplies. Development of this water source would require an energy-intensive (millions of kWh annually) pipeline and major pumping facilities. A fourth alternative would be a pipeline from Cameron to tie in to the proposed western Navajo Nation pipeline. It is not likely that growth will stop as the city approaches its capacity, but more likely that the City of Flagstaff will seek new water supplies like it has over the past 120 years. *The City of Flagstaff Utilities Integrated Master Plan* (2011) discusses these options in great detail.

Water is not supplied by the Coconino County government. Doney Park Water, a cooperative managed by a locally elected board, provides water to the Doney Park and Timberline-Fernwood areas. With about 3,300 customers in 2010, Doney Park Water has the capacity to provide water to the area at full build out (representing about a 60 percent increase in existing population), assuming there are no major changes in land use or zoning. Kachina Village is served by a water district that also has the capacity to serve the entire subdivision. Private water utilities serve Mountainaire, Flagstaff Ranch, and Bellemont. In Bellemont, additional wells will be needed to accommodate expected future growth. The Fort Valley area is served by private wells and hauled water, and the future is probably water districts with deep wells, of which two have recently been drilled. Many of the outlying county areas also rely on hauled water, and there must be sources for the provision of the water, whether that is the City of Flagstaff or standpipe sales at the rural water companies. Thus far, water has not been a major inhibitor of growth.



Photo by: XXXXXXXXXXXXX

